

12

Principles  
of American  
Democracy  
Standard 12.3.2.



# Active Voices: Civil Society and the Environment

## California Education and the Environment Initiative

Approved by the California State Board of Education, 2010

### The Education and the Environment Curriculum is a cooperative endeavor of the following entities:

California Environmental Protection Agency  
California Natural Resources Agency  
Office of the Secretary of Education  
California State Board of Education  
California Department of Education  
California Integrated Waste Management Board

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### Key Partners:

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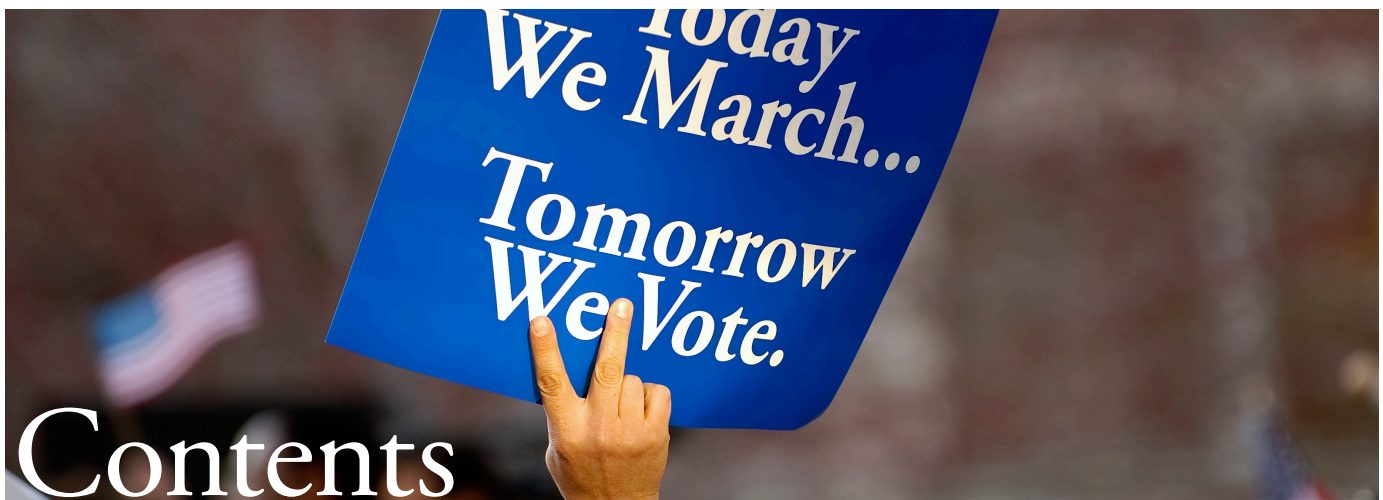
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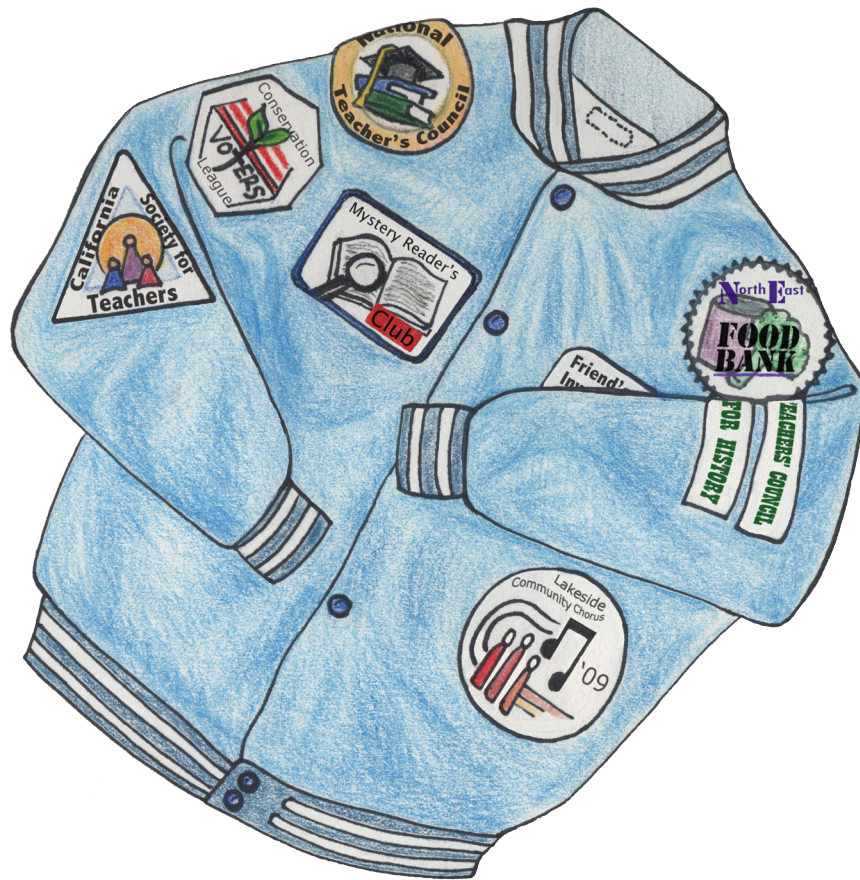
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**Lesson 5    Acting in Civil Society**

None required for this lesson.



## VA #1 An Organized Life



This jacket belongs to a government and economics teacher in California. She, like many Americans, belongs to several groups and organizations.

## VA #2 The First Amendment

*Congress shall make no law  
respecting an establishment of religion,  
or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;  
or abridging the freedom of speech, or  
of the press; or the right of the people  
peaceably to assemble, and to petition the  
Government for a redress of grievances.*



## VA #3 Upper Newport Bay Map



## VA #4 Charting What Happened

**Describe the Situation** (3 points)

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**Who and What?** (3 points each)

Who: \_\_\_\_\_

What: \_\_\_\_\_

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Who: \_\_\_\_\_

What: \_\_\_\_\_

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Who: \_\_\_\_\_

What: \_\_\_\_\_

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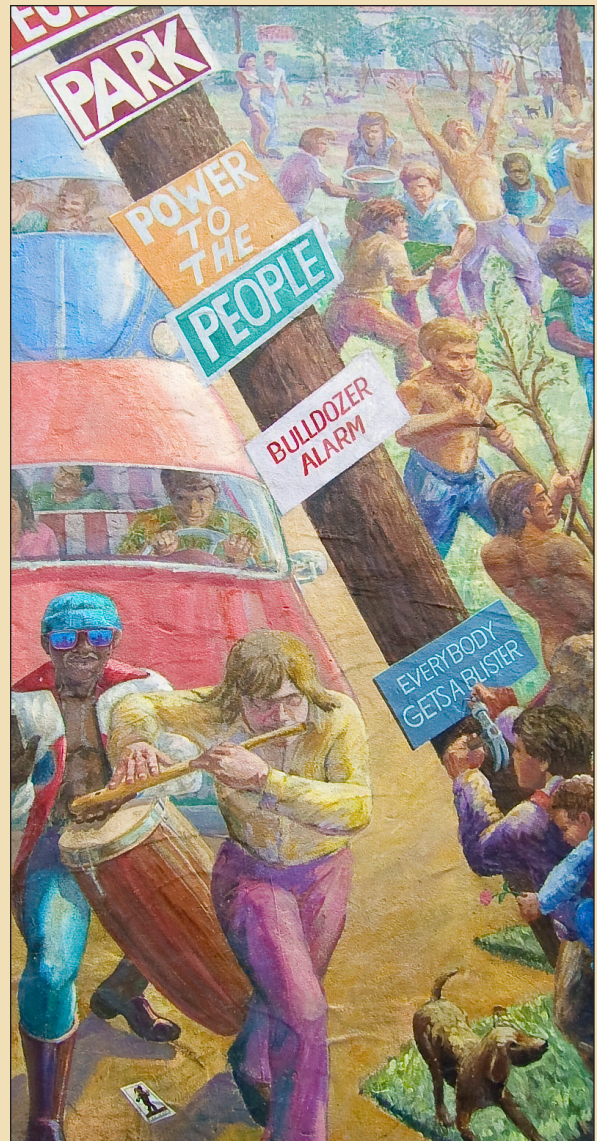
## VA #6 Chávez Ravine After Construction





## VA #7 The Evolution of People's Park

The history of People's Park in Berkeley, California, illustrates how individuals use varied strategies to influence government decisions about the use of natural resources.



## VA #8 Berkeley in the 1960s...



The 1960s were a turbulent time in the United States, with many university students engaging in protests against the Vietnam War and other injustices they saw in society.

## VA #9 The University of California



In the late 1960s, the University of California acquired a small plot of land in South Berkeley through the legal process of eminent domain.

The University intended to build dormitories on the land to house a growing student population.



## VA #10 Demolition



In 1968, the University evicted residents and demolished the houses built on the land.

After more than a year, the land still lay vacant.



## VA #11 An “Eyesore”

### Local residents complained that:

- The space was being wasted.
- The lot was an “eyesore,” muddy and full of weeds and garbage.
- The University failed to maintain the land.
- The lot had become an informal parking lot.



## VA #12 Taking Action



In April 1969, activists decided to claim the park as a public space and build a park in defiance of the University's legal rights to the property.

They organized through word of mouth and small community newspapers.

They gathered at the vacant lot and began planting trees and grass, painting murals, and holding cultural events.



## VA #13 Community Use



In the weeks that followed, members of the surrounding community, including students, merchants, and city residents, used the land as a park.

## VA #14 The University Strikes Back



These developments embarrassed University officials.

At first, the University offered to build a soccer field on the land and offered the community a say in how the rest of the land was developed.

But then the University sought to reassert their control of the land.



## VA #15 The End of the Park?

On May 13, 1969, the California Highway Patrol moved people off the land and erected a large fence with “No Trespassing” signs.

The UC Berkeley chancellor explained that this action was taken “to reestablish the conveniently forgotten fact that the field is indeed the University’s.”





## VA #16 Taking It to the Streets



Activists utilized their rights of free speech and freedom of assembly to actively resist the University.

On May 14, 1969, thousands of people marched down Telegraph Avenue toward the University campus, in support of the park.

## VA #17 Tensions Escalate



The protests quickly escalated into a violent confrontation between police, who were attempting to protect the legal rights of the University of California, and angry activists, who wanted the land for a community space.



## VA #18 Violence Erupts



The media played an important role in turning support toward the protestors, as disturbing images of rioting and tear gas appeared on national television.

One innocent bystander was killed by police gunfire, and many other people were injured during the rioting.

## VA #19 Law and Order

Governor Ronald Reagan eventually called in the National Guard to reestablish law and order.

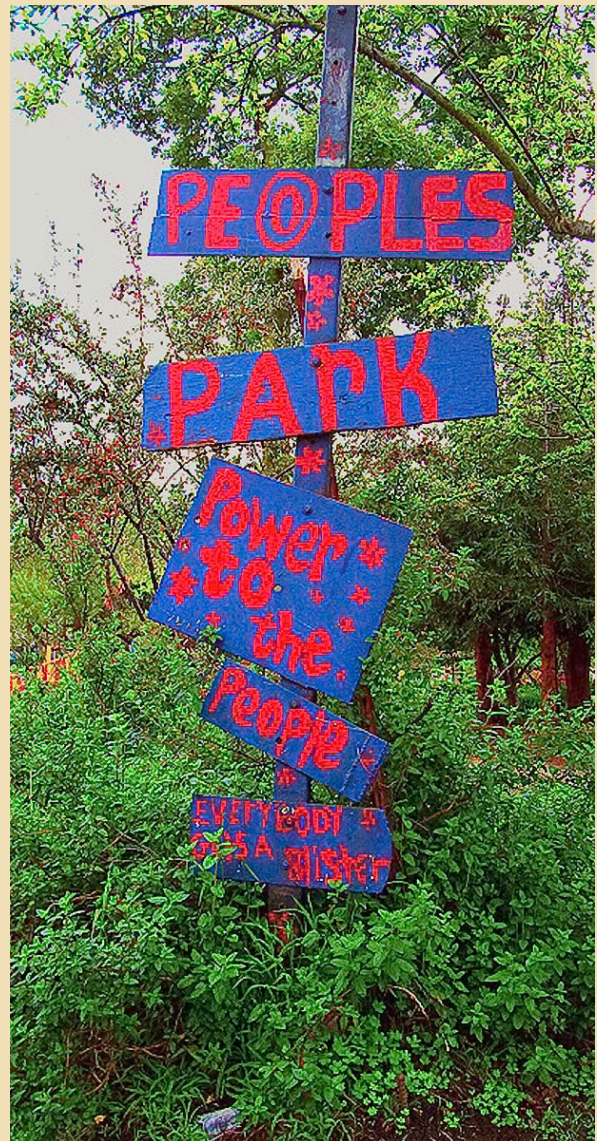




## VA #20 The University Concedes

After the riots, the University of California allowed the local residents to continue to use the land as a park.

Even today, however, use of the park is contested.





## VA #21 People's Park... For Now



In 2007, the University commissioned a study of the park's current state and future possibilities, which alarmed community members who continue to assert that they have the right to use the land for gardening, cultural events, providing services for the homeless, and other uses.









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